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The Cooper Union Museum for the Arts of Decoration

AN ILLUSTRATED SURVEY  
OF THE COLLECTIONS

Cooper Square, New York



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Cooper Square. New York : 1957

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## Introduction

Even in a museum, which is supposed by many to be the quiet resting-place of objects that have died of obsolescence or have been suffocated by over-solicitous custodians, the element of surprise is ever present. Here, as in the world at large, things are not always what they seem, and truth is elusive. Or if truth is constant, human perception is less so; the eye is not an entirely objective agent, and all too often it sees only what it is told to look for. Of such discrepancies in vision, comparable to changes in barometric pressure, is composed the history of taste.

Taste, in other words, is still more difficult to discover and to identify than is truth; and when it happens that one's course must be steered by both of these will-o'-the-wisps, rather than by either of them singly, the log of the voyage is likely to make interesting reading.

The history of the Cooper Union Museum does in fact offer much that is of interest, even to those who were not present when the Museum began its voyage sixty years ago. Fortunately this history has not yet to be

sought solely in written reports of the earlier years, or in the hearsay of those who did not observe at first hand. Among its staunch supporters the Museum is happy to count those who knew its founders, and who worked with them mightily in its creation and in the directing of its evolution. Thanks to these persons, there has flourished in the Museum a sense of continuity and of purpose that has been a great source of strength.

And what of this history, and of the guiding purpose of the Museum? To a remarkable degree, the Museum's history has been a fair reflection of its purpose. It has steadily pursued, these six decades, its aim of being useful in raising the level of design of the objects that furnish and adorn daily living. The choice of material in its collections, determined by the needs of those for whose benefit the Museum exists, is remarkably comprehensive. While seeking to obtain the best examples in the various categories of its collecting interest, the Museum recognizes that the requirements of designers, of students of design, and of the ultimate consumer, involve the

maintaining of a far larger number of categories than may have been considered elsewhere to merit assembly and display. There are, after all, other means of delighting the eye and satisfying the spirit than those of oil paint on canvas; and the imagination of today's designer is nourished and stimulated by a broader range of objects than those to which have been fastened, with varying proportions of hopefulness and accuracy, the names of distinguished creators. And besides finished objects of the decorative arts, in all their diversity, the Museum has endeavored to assemble illustrative material that will explain, as far as the mysterious processes of creation can be explained, the genesis and development of the material represented in its collections. Preliminary sketches and studies are sometimes of considerable value in explaining the artist's intentions and his working habits; a scrap from a banner two hundred years old contributes to an understanding of spinning and weaving in the American colonies; unfinished cameos and cameo blanks are a reminder of the career of Augustus Saint-Gaudens, an early student of The Cooper Union.

But the collections of this Museum have not been formed to be mute witnesses of what once was. Their purpose is to explain what now is, and to suggest what could be. Looking backward from idle curiosity is frequently fatal, as is proved by the example of Lot's wife; and besides developing its collections on the basis of their usefulness to today's designing requirements, the Museum offers further interpretation of its possessions through special exhibitions in which are treated specific topics of design, material and technique. And here is to be found some of the surprise previously mentioned; for often enough it happens that objects in the collection admired

in one context by an earlier generation develop other and equally valuable lessons for our own quite different day. An experience of this sort, when it occurs, goes far to reconcile the contradiction of those two aphorisms which would have it that beauty lies in the eye of the beholder, although a thing of beauty is a joy forever.

The sixtieth anniversary of the opening of the Cooper Union Museum provides an occasion for presenting a pictorial survey of the collections. In the following pages appear forty illustrations, representative of a collection now numbering some eighty thousand objects, which have been selected and annotated to show alike the range of material to be found in the Museum and the quality of characteristic examples in various categories. Fuller information about certain classes of objects has been published, from time to time, in the Museum's *Chronicle*. The present booklet, however, is the first picture book that has been issued by the Museum; and in commemorating an anniversary it commemorates also the generosity of hundreds of donors whose gifts and bequests have enriched the collections.

For the listing of the names of these donors space is no more adequate than it is for illustrating their gifts. Some of the more conspicuous benefactions, however, can not be left unmentioned: the bequest of old master prints, collected by George Campbell Cooper, which brought to the Museum its first Mantegna engravings and Rembrandt etchings even before the date of its formal opening; the magnificent gift, by J. Pierpont Morgan, of three European collections of textiles, which placed the young Museum at the forefront of institutions possessing mediaeval silk fabrics: and the steady stream of works of art and of books that came from the open-handed

founders, the Misses Sarah Cooper Hewitt and Eleanor Garnier Hewitt, through more than three decades. Exceptionally generous financial aid, from such amateurs of the arts as Miss Eleanor Blodgett, George A. Hearn and Jacob H. Schiff, permitted the early acquisition of many objects that could not now easily be bought; while the bequest of Erskine Hewitt and accompanying gifts by his nephew, Norvin Hewitt Green, added some hundreds of additional objects, collected by the Misses Hewitt, which admirably supplemented the Museum's treasure of drawings and ceramics. From America's most prodigious collector, William Randolph Hearst, came the remarkable gift of a Dutch tile room, unmatched in American collections. More recent benefactions have been made by Mr. and Mrs. R. Keith Kane, who gave jewelry, costume accessories and lace from the

collection of the late Mrs. Robert B. Noyes, and by Richard C. Greenleaf, donor of magnificent laces, embroideries, and accessories of costume. Still more recently has come the remarkable series of gifts from the regretted Leo Wallerstein and Mrs. Wallerstein, through which the Museum has received a large and distinguished collection of engravings by Dürer and other German masters of the sixteenth century, and of etchings by Rembrandt. For these gifts, for the countless objects of high quality given by an anonymous donor and by Irwin Untermyer, and for the generosity which has provided the funds—the Au Panier Fleuri Fund, the Pauline Riggs Noyes Fund, and the Friends of the Museum Fund—used in the purchase of objects, the Museum is profoundly grateful.

CALVIN S. HATHAWAY



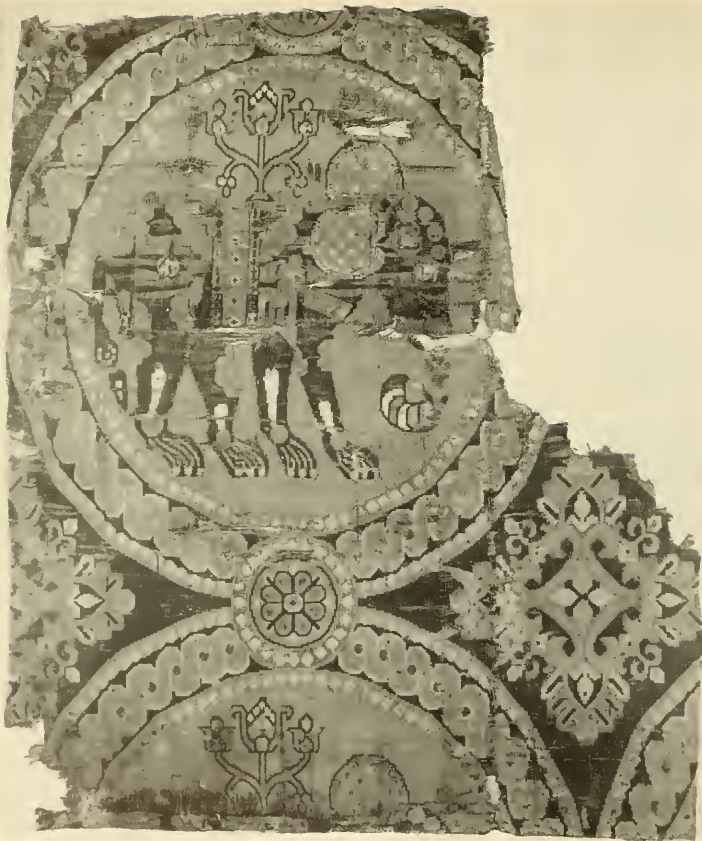


*Height, 7 $\frac{3}{4}$  in.*

An Early Christian saint appears here in the accepted style of the official portrait of a Roman consul, on a rearing horse with orb and sceptre, reduced from life-size stone to a small, brilliantly-colored roundel woven in wool and linen as part of a set of decorations for a tunic. A large amount of such material has fortunately been preserved in the dry sands of Egypt, then part of the East Roman Empire, ranging in size from great

linen curtains with mythological scenes, and heroes, views of gardens and country life, or saints of the early Church, to small decorations like this. The Museum's well-rounded collection of Coptic weaving illustrates the great diversity of existing types, some classical in feeling, others far advanced in the conventionalization of many local Coptic and Near Eastern styles, and serving as prototypes for contemporary painting.



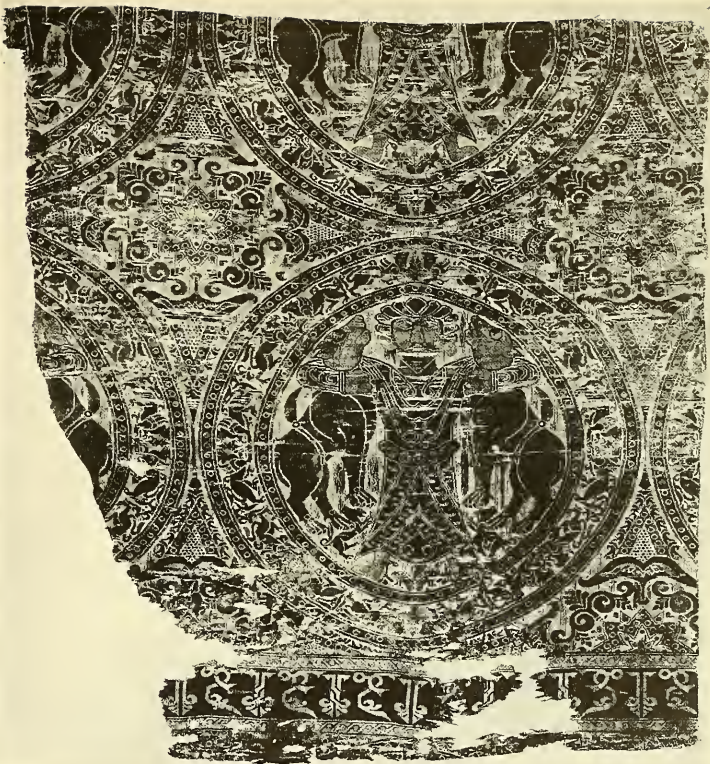


This monumental elephant, in black, white, and yellow on a crimson ground, was once one of a series on a silk vestment worn in a cathedral in Romanesque Europe. It is said to have come from the Cathedral of Vich in northeastern Spain. The subject itself has no religious connotation, but in this treatment is one of the many fantastic animals coming into Spain in the early Middle Ages with the Islamic conquerors from the Near East and Africa. In fascinating variety and liveliness, these creatures thronged medieval architectural detail, manuscript decorations, textiles, ivories, and wood-carvings, many of which were made for the service and glorification of the Church of the period, even in Islamic Spain. Elephants, in their actual rather than decorative aspect, were used as tanks in the Sassanian army, and Hannibal's renowned crossing of the Alps was made even more spectacular by its supporting elephants.

*Height of roundel, 17 in.*

"The Lion Strangler" is here embodied in a medieval silk from an ecclesiastical vestment of Hispano-Islamic Spain. A group of Hispano-Islamic silks in this characteristic striking arrangement of strong dark red, green, and yellow, with honeycomb metal brocading, on a cream ground, show these strange old motives in heraldic arrangement in strong roundels. Two silks of this type in the Cooper Union Museum collection bear confronted sphinxes bitten by contorted lions, and bird-ladies with snakes at their napes, standing on lions. Like the elephant, these motives probably came into Spain from the Near East with the Islamic invaders. Their earliest prototypes, however, may be seen exquisitely carved in Babylonian cylinder seals; and they were seen in Europe when they arrived in the archaic art of Greece. Many centuries later, in 18th and 19th-century France, sphinx-ladies were still flourishing in a more luscious and effulgent incarnation than ever before, no longer subjected to strangulation and, if possible, more enigmatic than ever.

*Height of roundel, 11 in.*





This beautiful medieval silk with its delicately patterned ground like moonlight has been assigned to many countries, and the mysterious details of its designs have been read in many ways. No one can say whether the three insect-like forms accenting each trefoil are spiders, horse-shoe crabs, or stylized plant-forms. And no one can say more than that the very fine, sophisticated weaving with "pockets" behind the satin areas, and twilled silver-gilt brocading now darkened with tarnish, is of a type found in Sicily, Spain, and Italy in the 14th century. The exquisitely graceful design itself, with Islamic inscriptions on banderoles, represents a union of Islam and the West particularly widespread at this time when Muhammanadism had extended its boundaries across Africa and far up into Spain, and the Mediterranean was busy with trading vessels between Europe and the Near East.

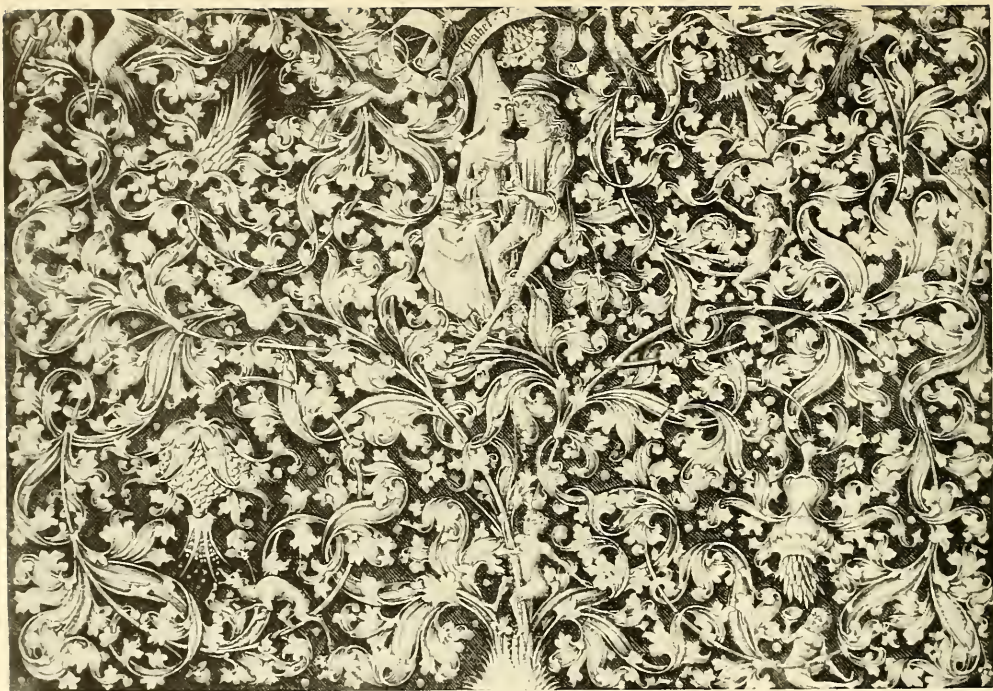
*Height of repeat, 8 in.*



The ceramic art of China during the T'ang and Sung dynasties did not fail to awaken artistic aspirations in neighboring Korea; there, similar technical and esthetic standards were adopted, as early as the ninth century. Celadon glazes appeared in a multitude of hues, some opaque bluish, some closer to an olive tint and more transparent. Such a glaze covers this gallipot, given by David James in memory of his brother, William James, which is decorated in an inlay technique of black and white clay, the invention of which is credited to the Korean potters. The graceful lines framing the medallions and the lower part of the vase betray some Near Eastern influence—a proof of the open exchange of ideas among the creators of objects made for human delight.

*Height, 8 $\frac{3}{8}$  in.*





*Height, 6 $\frac{3}{4}$  in.*

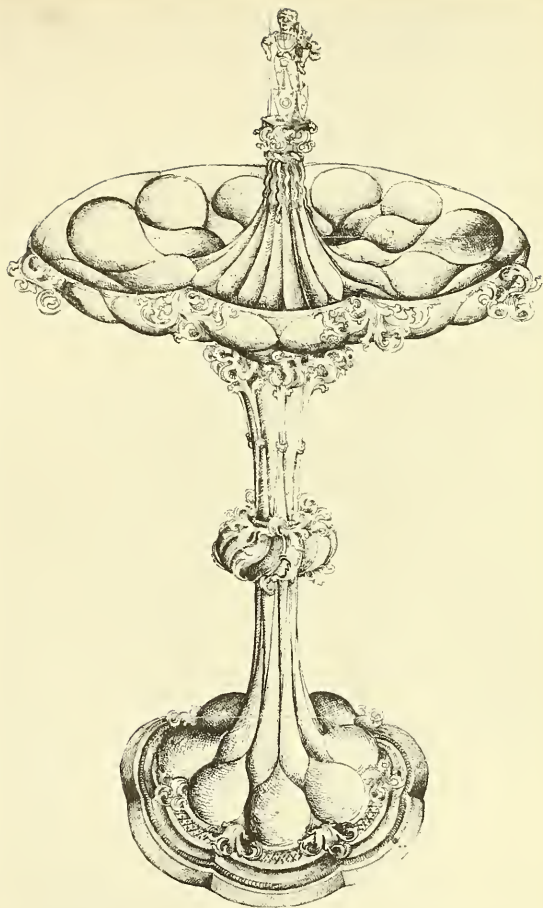
Probably the most prolific engraver of the 15th century, Israhel van Meckenem (before 1450–1503) shows his mastery as a designer in such ornament prints as this one, symbolizing the Garden of Love. This intricate work, done late in the artist's career, is one of the earliest ornament prints in the Museum's extensive collection of such material. Although carried out in the tradition

of late Gothic German florid surface pattern, the design looks directly forward to the interlacings of foliage seen in Northern European ornament prints of the 18th century. Like many of the finest prints given to the Museum in recent years, this engraving comes from the collection of Leo Wallerstein.



The awakening of the Renaissance in Northern Europe is indicated particularly well in the art of the engravers and metal craftsmen of Germany. This drawing, in pen and black ink with yellowish wash, is for a table centerpiece, commissioned of an Augsburg goldsmith about 1498, and honors the union of two important families, the Pfister and the Herewarth. Perhaps the designer was so proud of his work that he intended making an engraving of it, for this drawing possesses every indication of being intended for engraving, though no such print after it has yet come to light. Although the Museum is not fortunate in possessing an original Augsburg work of the period, such a sketch as this is perhaps still more seldom encountered than an actual object.

*Height, 16½ in.*





In spite of the rarity in America of 15th-century Italian drawings, this single example in the Museum's extensive collection of figure drawings is a sketch (shown here in actual size) in metalpoint on a prepared ground of a torso, a copy of a classical statue of the Venus Pudica type, and is attributed to Benozzo Gozzoli (1420-1497). The choice of subject gives visible proof of a lively interest in the antique enjoyed by Florentine artists of the Renaissance, for antique marbles are known to have existed in the Medici collections.

*Height, 6¾ in.*



*Height, 4¼ in.*

The small pastiglia casket, purchased with the aid of the Friends of the Museum Fund, is a work of Northern Italy, where artisans like the Venetian Embrachi family perpetuated the traditions of fine relief carving in ivory and bone. The gesso-like material employed in this small chest is treated in a similarly plastic way, raised in relief against a gilded ground. Characteristic of the period

around 1500, the motives on front and back are mythological scenes showing the Calydonian Boar Hunt and the Judgment of Paris, framed by pilasters and acanthus-leaf mouldings. In its shape the casket is related to more precious reliquaries, but the decoration is proof of its worldly purpose to house the small treasures of some Italian nobleman or lady.



An artisan's working drawing can be an important key to the study of the decorative arts. This preparatory sketch, in pen and bistre wash, is of the front elevation of the lower portion of a silver crucifix ordered by Cardinal Alessandro Farnese of the goldsmith, Antonio Gentili (1531-2-1609) for St. Peter's, Rome, in 1578. At either side are seen figures of bound captives, which existed as earlier pieces, around which Gentili has designed his object. On the reverse of the paper on which this drawing is made is another, a powerful, spontaneous sketch of a *Pietà*, which proves the further versatility of this draftsman.

*Height, 19 1/4 in.*



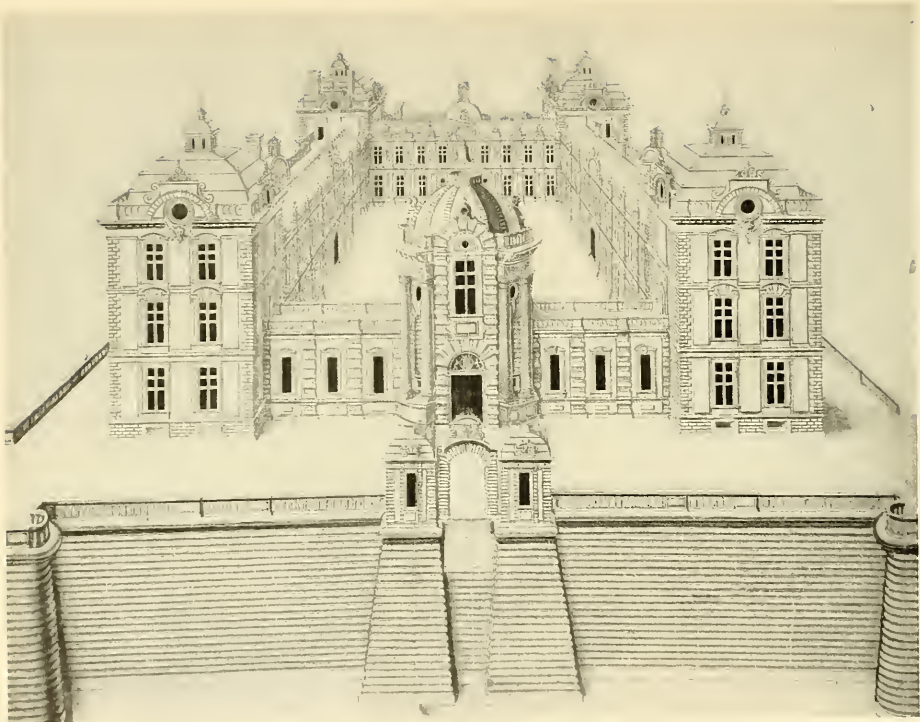


*Height, 7¼ in.*

The adaptability of leather to the most diversified purposes and treatments has provided mankind not only with material for clothing and an innumerable array of utensils, but also for highly decorative objects such as bookbindings, étuis and cofferets. The tooled surface of this 16th-century Italian example, given by Mrs. Max

Farrand, is covered with the familiar *groteschi* of Renaissance imagery, terminating in graceful scrolls, raised in relief against the punch-marked ground. It exploits the plastic qualities of leather in a thoroughly decorative way, while remaining an object of durability and fitness for practical purpose.





Height, 16<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> in.

Considered by the architect, Jacques Androuet Du Cerceau (1510-12-about 1585), his most important private undertaking, the Château de Verneuil, situated on the river Oise, north of Paris, was erected from 1568 to 1575. Unfortunately, in the 18th century the materials of this château were used to build another, so that all that remains today are the foundation stones. This pen

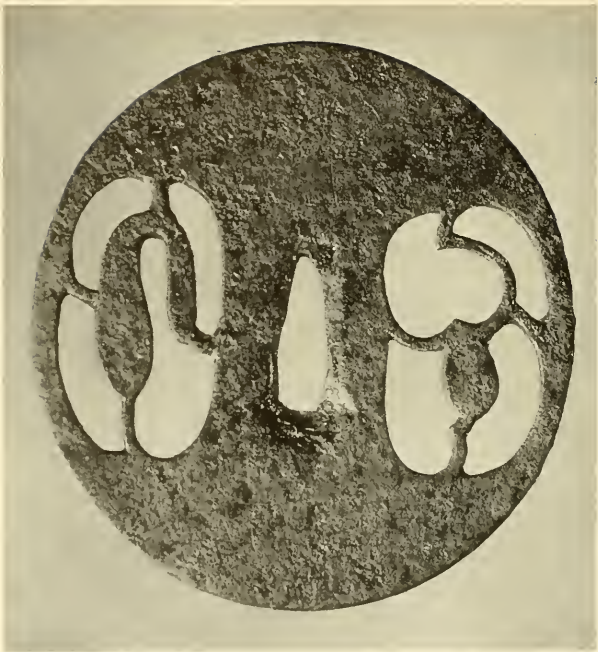
and wash drawing of Du Cerceau's second scheme, one of the few 16th-century architectural drawings in America, comes from the famous Destailleur and Decloux collections. It represents minor changes in disposition from the design of the château as published by Du Cerceau in his survey, *Les Plus Excellents Bastiments de la France*, of which the Museum possesses a copy.



*Height, 21 in.*

The embroidered panel, worked in couched gold and colored silks, brings into play the gift of the Italian Renaissance for beautifully organized pattern combined with exuberant fancy, here devoted to a religious theme. The elaborate symmetrical enframement of gold strap-work, dominated above and below by the four adoring winged figures emerging from foliage, the flower sprays, fruits, and twining ribbon, are conceived as the suitable setting to enclose the small

picture of the Nativity, so skilfully embroidered in pale silk and shaded gold. In its free composition within the circle are the kneeling Mary and Joseph before the Infant, shepherds, guardian angels, and above, heavenly forms cloud-borne. Purchased in 1955, this embroidery of the late 16th or early 17th century adds, to the Museum's collection of design of the same period in other media, a distinguished expression of ornament, composition, and of the technique of the needle.



The religious and aristocratic traditions connected with the making and wearing of the sword and its accoutrements provided seemingly endless suggestions to the craftsman's imagination; mythology and nature contributed alike to the masters who created these exquisite objects of adornment. Here is shown an early example of the art of the Japanese swordsmith, one of over eleven hundred sword mountings in the George Cameron Stone Bequest. Later examples, with their unbelievably fine workmanship of inlay and the use of contrasting metal alloys, are perhaps more familiar to American eyes; this 17th-century *tsuba*, or sword guard, evokes in silhouette the fallen camellia.

*Height, 4 in.*



This magnificent late 16th-century velvet is a witness to the close link at this time between Venice, the Bride of the Sea, and Turkey, the center of the great Ottoman Empire. Definitely eastern in its rich and daring color-scheme of strié mauve pile on lacquer-red satin, and in its mighty metal ogives with the delicate complications of supplementary leaves and stems showing the cinnabar ground color, it is still so much in accord with Venetian taste that the characteristic softness of its silver-gilt threads alone proves its Turkish origin. A beautiful chasuble-back in the Cooper Union Museum collection, with a silver-gilt palmette in a bold ogival satin and metal framework, centered in a field of grass-green strié pile on a red satin ground, is of the same group of resplendent fabrics where East and West do meet.

*Height of repeat, 40½ in.*





(Detail); width, 105 in.

This embroidered coverlet was made in India in the 17th century for export to Europe, and was carefully preserved until 1953 at Ashburnham Place in Sussex, in England. The popular design of the flowering tree, perhaps Elizabethan in origin and once an export from England to India, here returns to the western world in fine pink, green, and gold silk chain stitch in a version suggesting *famille rose* porcelain, with its enamel-like surface, lotus-like flowers, and paired phoenixes. In a

curtain of matching design, also in the Museum, an utterly different interpretation is achieved by the age-old Indian technique of treating a cotton cloth to a series of dyeing and painting processes so as to obtain a delicious richness of nuance, color and detail.

In another museum is a piece of early 18th-century crewel-work of the same design, embroidered, surprisingly, in New England.





*Height, 58 in.*

The development of pattern and design in Europe has been so spurred by contact with the East that the Dutch tile panel, in violet monochrome, here illustrated might well have served as a frontispiece to the present booklet. While there may be some ambiguity of subject matter (is cargo being loaded at an Eastern port, or unloaded in the West?), less uncertainty surrounds the origin of the

tiles, which appear to have been made in Rotterdam in the neighborhood of 1725, for Lubbert Adolf Torck of the Castle of Rozendaal, near Arnhem. Once in the possession of Léopold II, King of the Belgians, this panel, together with the tile facing for a complete room decorated in the style of Daniel Marot, was given to the Museum in 1926 by William Randolph Hearst.

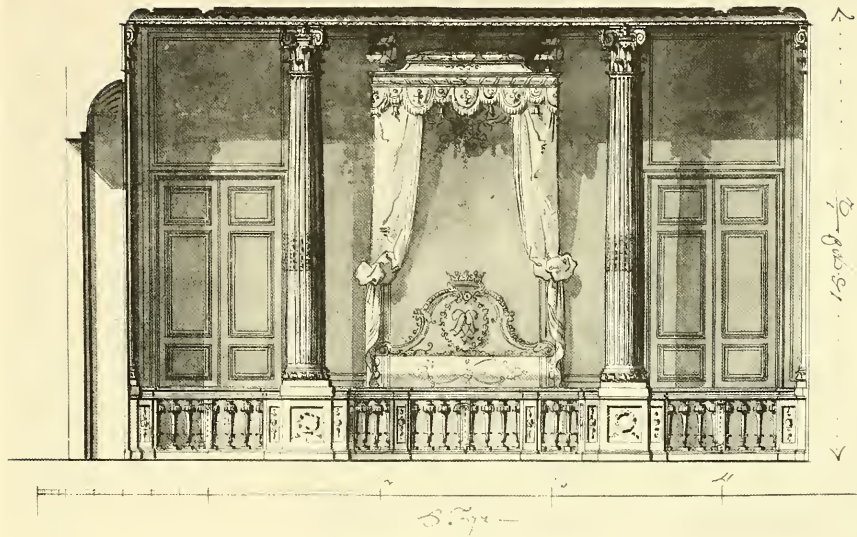


Height,  $4\frac{3}{4}$  in.

The use of gilt bronze mounts on furniture and architectural woodwork in 18th-century France is documented in the Museum by a rich collection of appliques, escutcheons and other decorative ornioln. From the chapel of Jules Hardouin Mansart at the Palace of Versailles, all white and gold except for ceiling and floor, comes this finely modelled lock case, bearing the Royal emblems:

a sceptre, terminating in a fleur-de-lis and symbolizing the king's sovereignty, crossed with the *main de justice*, sign of the monarch's judicial power over the lives and property of his subjects, and interlaced with the Crown of Thorns, symbol of the spiritual power emanating from this holy relic brought into French possession by St. Louis.

*Fauteuil de L'alcove pour la Chambre à coucher de M. le R.*



Height, 8 1/4 in.

Gilles Marie Oppenort (1672-1742), one of the greatest innovators in the development of French rococo design, has left a rich legacy of drawings and engravings of his own work. This Museum is fortunate in possessing some drawings and a number of engravings of Oppenort's work, including the series collected, engraved and published by Huquier, all of which come from the collection

of Léon Decloux. This drawing, in pen and ink, delicately washed with watercolors, is Oppenort's design for the Royal bed alcove of the Palais Royal, the official Paris residence of the Regent, Louis, duc d'Orléans, a commission which was completed in 1716. Also in the Decloux collection are similar drawings by other famous decorators of the period, as well as many for furniture design.



Tea was at once a cause and an expression of English prosperity. As the East India Company's merchantmen brought ever-increasing quantities of the fragrant leaves to England, the profitable trade created a train of pleasant events, one of which was the making of this elegant London tea-kettle on stand. Perhaps under influence from the Continent, where enjoyment of full, rounded forms was more freely indulged, the basically Chinese shape of his kettle has been given a self-assured amplitude that is yet measured and contained by the scale of the moulding bands of curved profile. The kettle, made by William Fawdery and dated 1711-1712, partakes of the abstract nature of a chessman, or of a topiarist's clipped yew. For this distinguished example of the silversmith's art the Museum is indebted to Irwin Untermyer.

*Height, 14 $\frac{1}{4}$  in.*

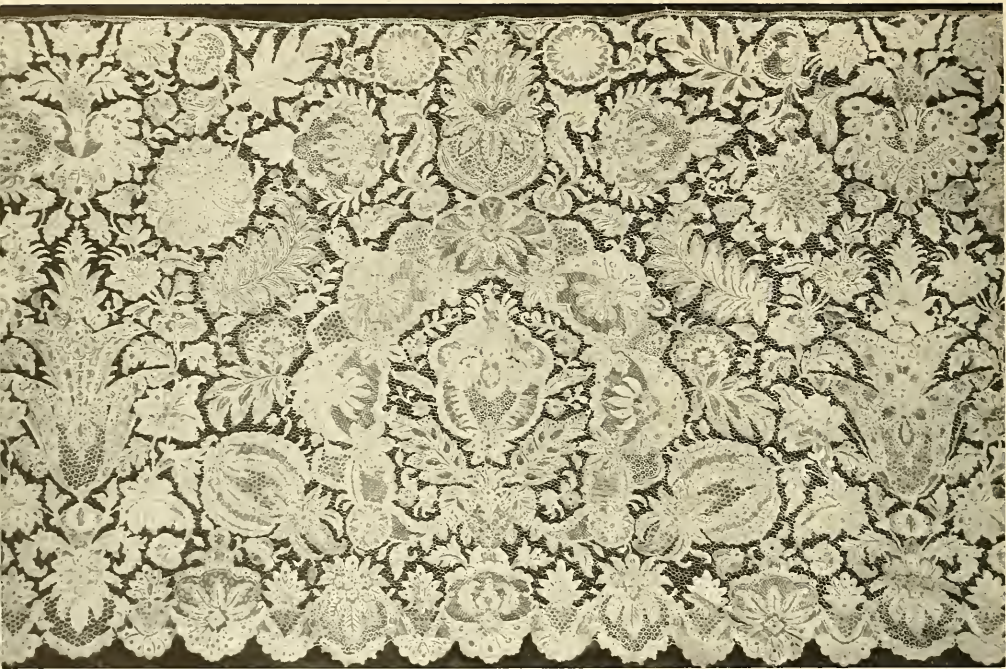


An appeal of Venetian 18th-century drawings is the verve and sparkle with which they are rendered. This study, in pen and bistre wash, for an *Annunciation*, is by one of the greatest of the Venetian draftsmen, Giovanni Battista Tiepolo (1696–1770). Heavy forms and strong contrasts allow us to place this hurried yet dynamic sketch midway in the artist's career. In addition to this drawing and two others, the Museum possesses a nearly complete set of the etched works of Tiepolo and his two sons, all collected by Miss Sarah Cooper Hewitt.

*Height, 16¼ in.*







*Height, 25<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> in.*

This flounce of needle lace, the gift of Richard C. Greenleaf in 1950, is a dramatic example of those elaborate laces known as *Points de France*, which developed under the royal patronage of Louis XIV and of which the Museum's collection contains other fine pieces. It is to be remembered that from the 16th century to the Revolution lace was as much worn by men as by women; their cravats, collars, cuffs, and, for churchmen, flounces

on albs, appear often in portraits. In the opulent design of the Museum's piece the arrangement of rich floral forms in wreath and spray clings to the inherent symmetry of late 17th- and early 18th-century textile pattern, to which latter period this lace belongs; but by extraordinary variety of skilful stitches, producing light and solid areas, contrasts of mass and shade are achieved, the peculiar gift of lace at its finest.



*Diameter, 14¾ in.*

When the Meissen porcelain manufactory went into its third decade, a marked change took place from the pictorial to a more plastic ornamentation. After a number of table services with relief borders, of which the well-known “Erhabene Blumen” is represented by three pieces in the Museum collection, Johann Joachim Kändler (1704–1775) began work on the unprecedented project of an enormous service decorated with shells,

water plants, tritons, and groups of swans, giving the service its name. The sensitively modelled relief of this large plate, where the ripples of the water provide a background for the graceful swans, is proof of the ingenuity and artistry with which Kändler attacked his task to provide the Director of the factory, Count Brühl, with the most fabulous tableware conceived in porcelain.



The eighteenth century saw sudden and great expansion in the knowledge of materials and techniques, a knowledge quickly applied to the enrichment of daily living. With this gilded drinking glass, however, the moment of mass distribution is still remote; its elegantly engraved sides are more suggestive of court than of cottage. Probably made in Silesia, in the 1740's, its fanciful adornment with Chinese garden scenes and sailing vessels must have been designed to carry its user away from the here and now, and in so doing to further the mission of its contents.

*Height, 6 in.*

The innumerable attempts to approximate in Europe the qualities of the fervently desired and highly prized Chinese porcelain produced many more or less successful inventions. In spite of the difference in composition—not kaolin, but ground glass, was used in the effort to attain whiteness and translucency—some of the French soft paste porcelain in its appearance comes very close to the *blanc de Chine* of Fukien. The warm shimmering whiteness, so different from the cold brightness of true porcelain, was favored by the French long after Böttger's secret had spread from Meissen. This small jar from Mennecy, given by Mrs. Edward Luckemeyer, is an example of the delightful products of the French factories around 1750, using the traditional Chinese applied floral decoration in swags of more customary European style to enhance the simple shape.

*Height, 6½ in.*





*Height, 117 $\frac{5}{8}$  in.*

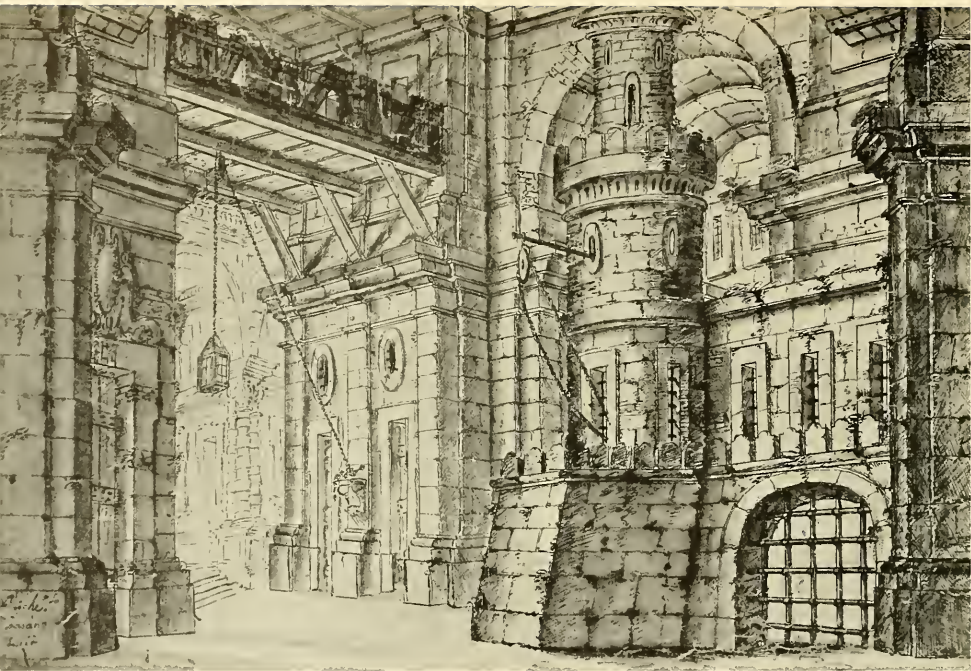
The creation of urban landscapes and the great development of palatial architecture during the eighteenth century provided rich opportunities for the use of ornamental grille-work, for the enclosure of whole squares like the Place Stanislas in Nancy, or for gates, balconies and decorative architectural details. In the Museum collection of wrought iron, this bracket and lantern (given by Isabella Barclay, Inc.) together with a monumental balcony from the Bishop's Palace at Konstanz, are representative of the South German ironwork which has its most famous expression in the Residenz gates of Würzburg. The diversified scrollwork of plain bars and flat, pierced elements blends with graceful flowers and stalks to a rich harmony of conventionalized and naturalistic elements. The ornamental beauty of geometrical compositions is further represented in the Museum by examples of French wrought ironwork, and by American cast iron of the nineteenth century.



Such French silversmiths' work of the 18th century as succeeded in evading royal edict and escaping the melting pot was all too often the victim, finally, of a still more deadly enemy: change of fashion. A pair of candelabra now in the Museum preserves to our own century the evidence of designer's ability and master craftsman's skill, and illustrates the double capacity of the rococo style for sculptural solidity and linear movement. A strong twisted baluster form here supports branches almost wiry in their turnings, the twisted modelling of the candle sockets providing a final note of harmonious repetition of the dancing flames of the candles for whose support this gleaming confection was designed. Made in 1759-1740 by the Parisian master Claude Ballin the Younger, these candelabra add a third dimension to the Museum's extensive collection of designers' prints and original drawings for similar creations.

*Height, 19 $\frac{5}{16}$  in.*





*Height, 10½ in.*

One of the interesting groups of drawings in the Museum's collection is that of French and Italian theatrical designs, ranging from the mid-17th century to about 1840. This design for a stage setting by Michelangelo Pasano (active about 1750–1775), carried out in pen and ink with grey washes, shows the dungeon of a great castle. It displays complicated perspective, successfully realized

in the hands of this Italian designer, and probably considerably enlivened what otherwise might have been a rather dull spectacle. In addition to the Bibiena, the names of many minor designers for the theatre—names all but unknown elsewhere—are encountered in this group of drawings.

French weaving of the 18th century achieved heights of technique required to produce the variety of silks and graceful elements of costume of that century's fashion. The waistcoat of silver cloth, brocaded in colors and gold, is an example of the skill, taste and textile design of the last quarter of the century. The silver ground, flecked with green and gold flowers, is woven in one with the narrow elaborate border. Here red roses in chenille intertwine with garlands of gold; flower heads of colored foil are outlined with gold cord; and stems, with threads of minute paillettes. Yet so adroit is the handling of the many elements that the grace of the whole is not overburdened. Lent four years ago for a temporary exhibition, in which were also shown many of the Museum's original drawings for waistcoats, this brilliant masterpiece has now been given by Richard C. Greenleaf in honor of the Sixtieth Anniversary of the Museum's opening.

*Height, 32 in.*





Whether monumental construction, animated with figures of the twelve Apostles, Christ and the Devil, and measuring out time from the tower of a medieval city hall, or small wonder of precision, embedded in a jewelled case of diminutive size, timepieces have always attracted the efforts of artist-craftsmen. A Japanese lacquerer made the lofty cage for a *Yagura Dokei*, an English cabinetmaker built the early 18th-century case for John Scott's standing clock, and Pierre Philippe Thomire may well have been the master of the rich gilt bronze decoration of an amusing French Empire clock, which all form part of the collection of clocks in the Museum. Illustrated here is a French mantel clock, of about 1775, given by Louis J. Bosman and formerly in the collection of Mrs. Henry Walters; the work by Le Comte is flanked by allegorical figures in gilt bronze, placed on a carved marble base.

*Height, 22½ in.*





*Height, 53 in.*

The changing social life of the 18th century gave birth to a multitude of new types of furniture, from tea table to bergère and to coquettish *bonheur du jour*, where inventiveness played hide-and-seek in secret compartments and hidden drawers. Nearly as magic as any of these, but far more functional, is this architect's table, which provides drawers, writing board, a top adjustable in two directions and at many angles, and an automatic-

ally emerging book rest, not to mention brackets for the attachment of candle sockets. Made in Neuwied by David Röntgen (1743-1807), one of the German cabinet-makers who were particularly favored by Marie Antoinette and in consequence by a large circle of customers in Paris, the table is a piece of beautiful proportions, of ingenious as well as minutely careful execution.





*Height, 8 in.*

An increasing concern with the problems of city planning has aroused considerable interest in the work of planners and architects of past generations. This ink drawing by Giuseppe Valadier (1762-1859), one of many of similar character in the Museum's collection of drawings, exhibits the interest on the part of late 18th-century Italian architects in the same problems that confront us today. Valadier, chiefly remembered for his resourceful re-

visions of Rome's streets and squares, was, as well, a designer of interior decoration, furniture, metalwork and ecclesiastical ornamentation. All phases of his remarkable versatility are to be seen in the multiplicity of his drawings now in the Museum, originally collected in Rome by the Cavaliere Giovanni Piancastelli and brought to New York in 1901.



*Height, 7 $\frac{1}{4}$  in.*

Portraits of interiors are less common than portraits of persons. Even so, an interior, too, can possess a personality of its own. Such is the case with this charming view, in bright watercolors, of a German sitting room by a Coblenz artist who dates his work 1858 and signs himself

as Rhaes. The rubber plants, post-Biedermeier furniture and florid wall-paper give us a glimpse of the city-dweller's taste of the period. Views like this are not common; even so, it is hoped that this phase of the Museum's collection will grow richer in time.



*Height. 59½ in.*

Suggestive of the rhythmical movement it performs, the steel framework of this rocking chair shows an astonishing presentiment of 20th-century developments in furniture building, and seems to have been the first step on the way leading from mid-Victorian exuberance in carving and upholstery toward what the Bauhaus movement seventy years later labelled "machines for

sitting." Uniting rocker, leg, seat rail and back post in one continuous line, which acts as a spring, Peter Cooper, founder of Cooper Union and builder of the *Tom Thumb*, extended here the range of his interest in locomotion, an interest that began with his patented self-rocking cradle and included the building of America's first home-grown railroad "engine."



*Height, 16 $\frac{5}{8}$  in.*

In the Museum's collection of over three hundred drawings and twenty-two oils given by Charles Savage Homer, nearly every phase of the development of the American artist, Winslow Homer (1836-1910), is represented. Perhaps the most interesting of Homer's drawings are those which were done at the outset of the artist's career as artist-correspondent for *Harper's Weekly*, during the

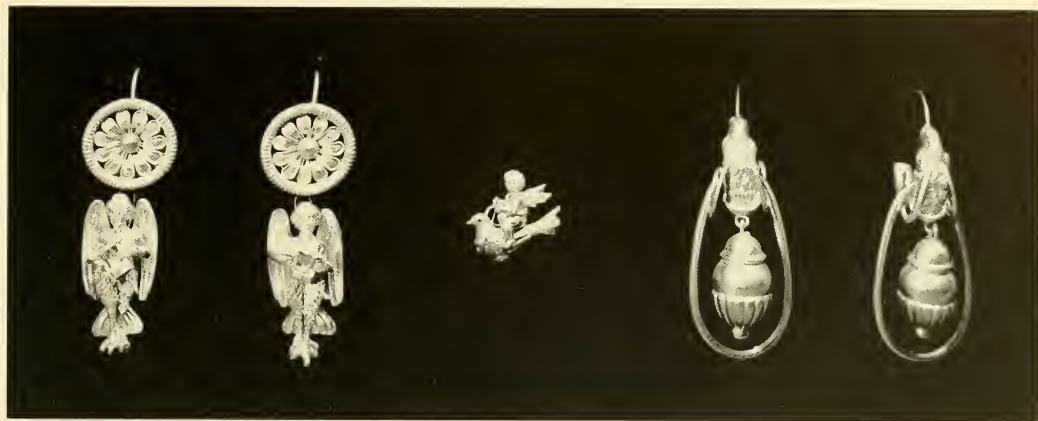
Civil War. Later, he became almost completely absorbed in the sea and the people who work and live with it. This study, given by Charles W. Gould, in black and white chalks on green-grey paper, for *Banks Fishermen*, also called *The Herring Net*, shows the artist's characteristic method in which the highlights are separately rendered.





There is sometimes a world of difference between taste and decoration, between design and pattern, between the intent of the artist and its realization. Some viewers might be reminded, by this wallpaper panel, of Grandmother's Whatnot; others may find in it a superb example of French wallpaper production in the mid-19th century. Against a rich beige ground is set a walnut-colored structure with touches of gold, recalling the elaboration of late 16th-century ornament and providing a suitably ceremonious setting for the central episode, printed in many gradations of color from yellow through cream to pure white. Whether screen-printed in one color or produced with several hundred woodblocks, the wallpapers of the Museum's collection provide at once a full view of the history of wallpaper manufacture and a useful insight into the mind, the methods and the taste of decorative designers through two centuries.

*Height, 937<sup>8</sup> in.*



Jewelry is usually valued as much for the preciousness of its materials as for its artistic merit which, in consequence, is often low. The Museum is particularly fortunate in its collection of jewelry, representing the changes of style over the past two centuries, and in its remarkably large collection of jewelry designs covering an even longer span. The jewels shown here illustrate the taste, in all meanings of that abused word, and the technical proficiency of the 19th century. The gold

earrings in the form of sirens, whose eyes are closed in the ecstasy of their song, are archaeologically exact reproductions of Greek pieces of the Fifth or Fourth Century, B.C.; while the rams' heads in the "Etruscan" style are a freer adaptation of antique elements. The tiny (five-eighths of an inch) head of a pin, a winged boy on a bird, is a *tour de force* of granular work that calls for a magnifying glass.



The versatility of glass as a transparent, clear substance, and a colored, opaque paste, has been a multiple challenge for the craftsman since the beginnings of glassmaking: to exploit its fragile, transcendent qualities or to paint or encrust it and thus make use of colors in its ornamentation. In this *Favrile* glass (given by Harry Harkness Flagler), Louis Comfort Tiffany, at the beginning of the present century, united the two trends in a vase of classic outline. The transparencies and opacities form a pattern of a distinctly organic, but quite abstract kind, which is enhanced by superimposed lustered strokes, evoking the iridescence of the decayed surface of ancient glass, and at the same time adding a shimmering glow to the delicate shades of pink and amber.

*Height, 9 in.*

The Museum's furniture collection is distinguished above all in the abundance of chairs that remind the visitor how many and varied are the solutions for the problems of design. The rocking chair on page 40 represents one extreme in practicality; this chair, on the contrary, presents the triumph of an idea over its means of realization. It is of an admirably close-grained wood offering little opposition to the flowing lines of the style which was considered so "organic" by its practitioners in Paris at the onset of the present century. Hector Guimard (1867-1942) is well known as the designer of the Paris Métro entrances. Here can be seen an equally hospitable exuberance in the design of a chair for his own dining room; and, through the generosity of Madame Guimard, the Museum possesses further examples of his work in many other media.

*Height, 44½ in.*







*Le Feu* is one of a series of four silks representing the elements, earth, air, fire and water, designed by Made-moiselle Clairinval, executed by Tassinari and Chatel in Lyon, shown at the Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs in Paris in 1925, and given to the Museum by an anonymous donor to whose generosity are due many of the Museum's finest possessions.

Though one of man's baseless beliefs is that of the Salamander's love of flame, which moved Francis I to place it on his arms "*comme emblème de son ardeur amoureuse*," it has connotations of courage and hope. In this silk, against a dark brown satin ground grow flower-like forms of orange flames in which the salamanders move; and above swirl golden clouds of smoke.

An end and a beginning.

*Length of repeat, 22 in.*





















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